

THE
DEFENDERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

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1978

THE DEFENDERS

EARTHLINGS,
UNLESS YOU INSTANTLY
SURRENDER--

YOUR PLANET
DIES!

THIS IS IT! THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN THE DYING
DEFENDERS AND THE BAREFOOT BADGON!

STEVE LEE
PRESENTS

THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS!

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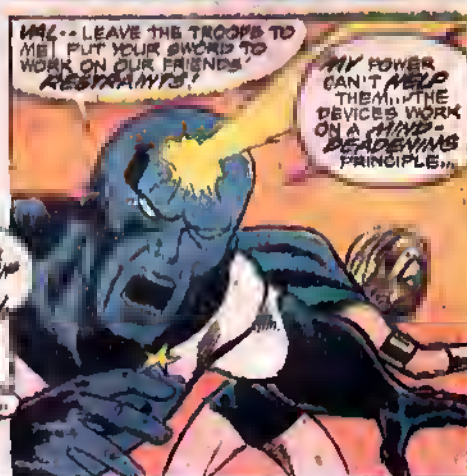
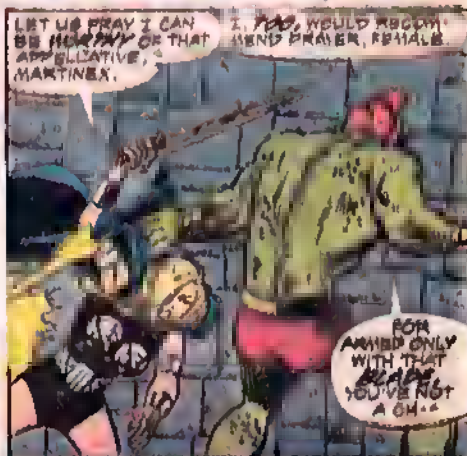
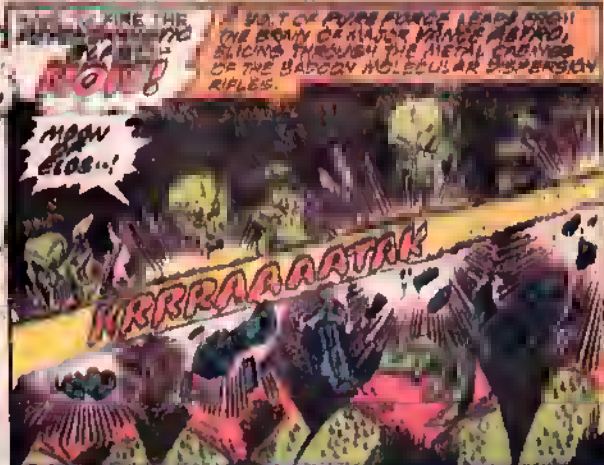
LET MY PLANET GO!

UP AGAINST THE WALL,
NIGHTHAWK OF THE
DEFENDERS... MARTINEZ
AND CHARLIE, 27 OF
THE GUARDIANS OF
THE GALAXY.

PREPARED TO BLAST THEM INTO THE
WALL: A FIRING SQUAD OF THE
BROTHERHOOD OF BADDOON, EARTH'S
ALIEN CONQUERORS. FOR THIS IS THE
YEAR 3015 A.D., AND THESE THREE
HAVE DARED DEFEY THE RULE OF
HUMANITY'S NEW MASTERS.

ON PLANETWIDE VIDEO,
ALIEN AND WOMEN HUDDLED
IN SLAVE CAMPS WATCH IN
HORROR. FOR THIS IS MORE
THAN AN EXECUTION OF MEN.
A DREAM OF FREEDOM IS
ABOUT TO BE PUT TO DEATH.

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THAT'S WHY CHARLIE AND MARTINEY HAVEN'T
BROKEN FREE **ALREADY**. NEITHER SYSTEMS
WON'T RESPOND TO THEIR BRAIN **ORDERS**
TO USE THEIR POWERS...

I'D **HOPED**
ABOUT IT...

LISTEN... I'M
AS INTERESTED
AS ANYONE IN
BADDON
TECHNOLOGY...

...BUT FOR NOW,
COULD WE **SKIP**
THE CONVERSA-
TION...

...AND
JUST **RUN**
FOR OUR
LIVES?

YOUR MILITARIAN'S INSTINCTS
HAVE **FAILED** YOU,
CHARLIE. WE SHOULD'VE
PAUSED TO CONSIDER...

...WHAT WE
MIGHT BE RUNNING
INTO?

HALT!

ANOTHER
STORM
OF BADDON!

DON'T SOUND SO
SURPRISED, VAL.
THERE ARE NEARLY
AS MANY OF THEM
ON EARTH...

...AS THERE
ARE
HUMANS.

...AND AS ONE
THE ONSLUING
RAIDING **EXPEDS**
IN THEIR TRACKS...

WITH THOSE WORDS, THE
SOLE SURVIVOR OF EARTH'S
FLUYIAN COLONY GRUL
EXTENDS HIS LEFT HAND...

LITERALLY
NOW CAN WE
GET OUT OF
HERE?

WITH ALL DUE
HASTE
NIGHTMARE...
YES.

WE SHOULD BE
SAFE HERE FOR
A WHILE.

LONG ENOUGH
TO HEAR NOW
VAL AND VANCE
GOT BACK TO
EARTH, I HOPE.

WE
DON'T
KNOW
NOW.

UNTIL A MOMENT AGO,
WE STOOD ON THE
HOMEWORLD OF THE
BADDON. THEN, WITHOUT
WARNING, WE FOUND
OURSELVES TRANS-
PORTED HERE, AS
IF BY MAGIC!

PERHAPS IT WAS
STEPHEN'S DOING.
HE IS NOT **WITH**
YOU. COULD HE
HAVE...

NO,
VAL.

I-I DON'T KNOW HOW TO
TELL YOU THIS--I CAN
HARDLY BELIEVE IT
MYSELF...

BELIEVE **WHY?**
SAY IT!

DR. STRANGE
IS DEAD,
VAL.

*LAST ISH TO US... MARY.

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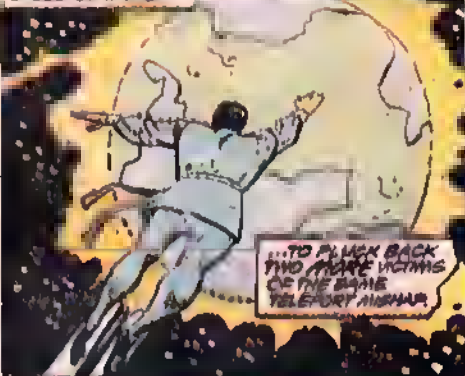
...QUITE! THE MYSTIC
MASTER'S PHYSICAL BODY GAVE
THE APPEARANCE OF DEATH.
WHAT WITH ITS MINIMAL META-
BOLIC FUNCTIONS... BUT ONLY
BECAUSE DR. STRANGE HAD
ABANDONED THAT SHELL OF
FLESH AND BONE...



...TO ROAM THE
COSMOS IN HIS
ASTRAL FORM.



IN TRUTH, HE WAS
RESPONSIBLE FOR
VAL'S RESCUE, AND
NOW, WITH THE
SPEED OF THOUGHT...

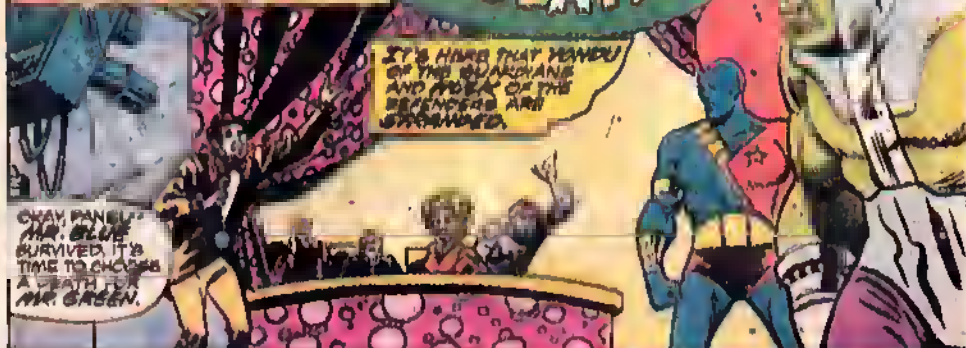


...HE RACES
THROUGH THE DARK
VOID TO A SECOND
WEIRD WORLD...

...TO PLUCK BACK
TWO MORE VICTIMS
OF THE BLAME
TELEPORT ANIMATOR.

IT'S A PLANET OF DREAMS AND UNDOING,
WHERE A FUTURISTIC TECHNOLOGY GOES
WITH BARBARIC DISDAIN FOR THE VALUE OF
LIFE, A WORLD WHERE DEATH IS A
FESTIVAL... AND A GAME.

R. DEATH SW



IT'S HERE THAT HUNDREDS
OF THE GUARDIANS
AND IDEAS OF THE
DEFENDERS ARE
STRANDED.

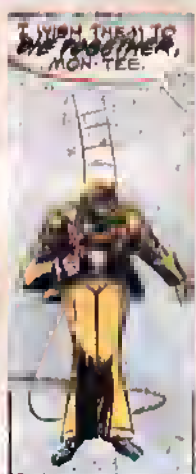
OHAY PANEL!
MR. BLUE
SURVIVED. IT'S
TIME TO CHOOSE
A DEATH FOR
MR. GREEN.



WELL, BOYS... IT'S
EMPEROR CORBET
HIMSELF WITH A NEW
CONTESTANT FOR US!

A FORMER WIFE
OF MINE, MON-TEE,
BUT FROM WHAT I
OVERHEARD IN
THE DUNGEON...

GUESS I'D PREFER
MR. GREEN AS
HER MATE.

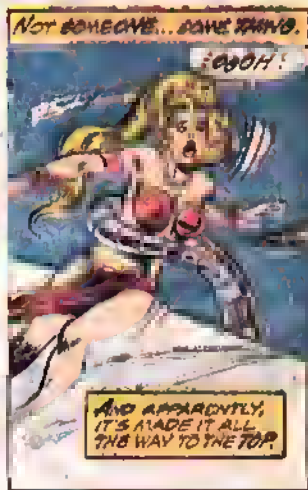
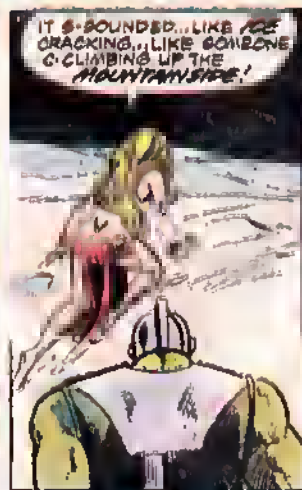
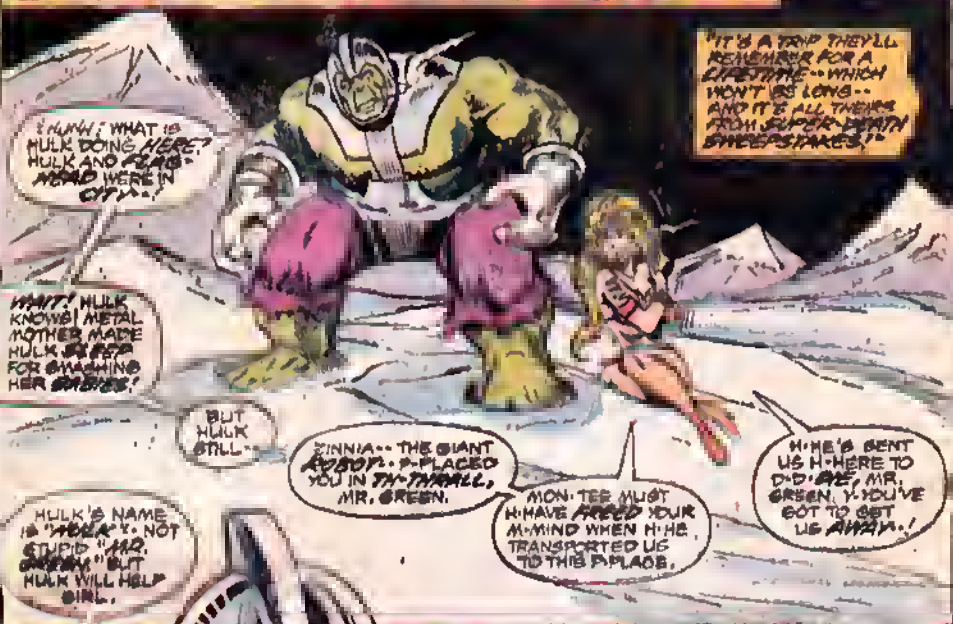


I WISH THEM TO
DIE TOGETHER,
MON-TEE.



"YOU HEARD THE EMPEROR'S COMMAND,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. THAT MEANS MR.
GREEN AND HIS PRETTY FRIEND HAVE WON
A TRIP TO..."

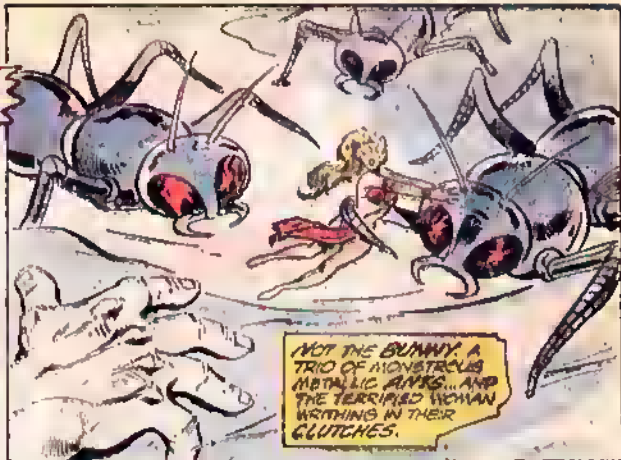
--STONY COUNTRY! THAT ICE-COVERED SUN-BED WAS TOLD TO THE EAST, FAR SOUTH, A FAVORITE REPORT LOCATION OF DISSEMINATING POLITICAL BULLS FOR CENTURIES NOW.



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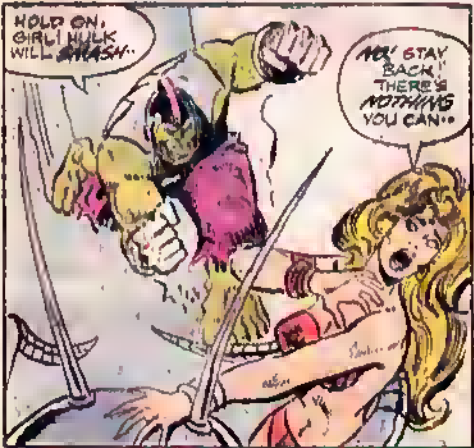
EMERALD EYES WIDE, THE DAPE
GIANT STALKS FORWARD TO
THE EDGE OF THE GLOPS, THERE
TO BEHOLD...

BUGS!

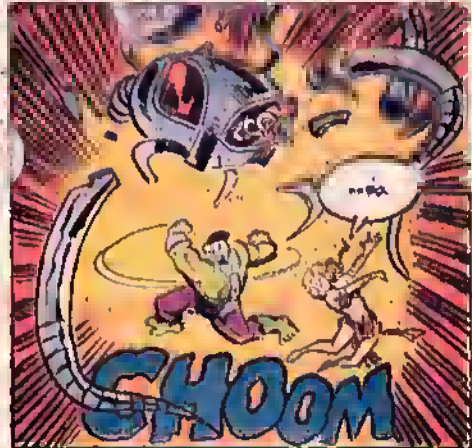


NOT THE BUNNY, A
TRIO OF MONSTROUS
METALLIC ANTS...AND
THE TERRIFIED WOMAN
WRITHING IN THEIR
CLUTCHES.

HOLD ON,
GIRL! HULK
WILL CRASH..

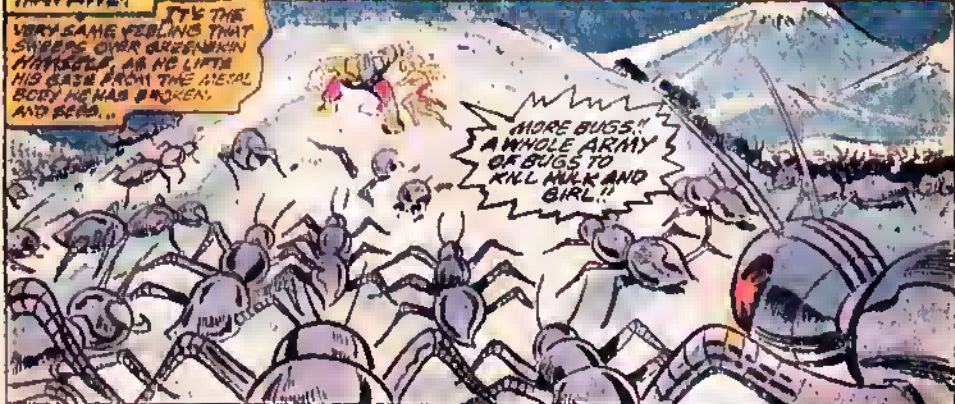


HEY! STAY
BACK!
THERE'S
NOTHING
YOU CAN..



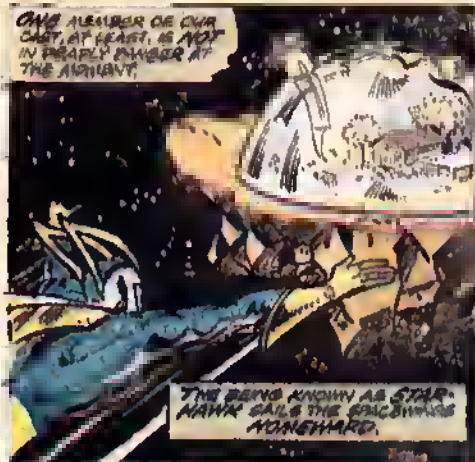
IN THE PUNISON, HULK'S AWARE AMBULATURE--SO DIFFERENT FROM THE SOFT, WINE-SCAKED BODIES
OF THE MEN HE KNOW--ACCUSED HER CYNDSITY. NOW HE MOVES FROM HER NOTHING LESS
THAN APP..

IT'S THE
VERY SAME FEELING THAT
SHEDS OVER GREENSKIN
HIMSELF, AS HE LIFTS
HIS CASE FROM THE METAL
BODY HE HAS BROKEN,
AND SEES..



MORE BUGS!!
A WHOLE ARMY
OF BUGS TO
KILL HULK AND
GIRL!!

ONE MEMBER OF OUR
CAST, AT LEAST, IS NOT
IN DEEPLY AMBER AT
THE MOMENT.



THE BEING KNOWN AS STAR-
HAWK SAYS THE ENCOUNTERING
WONDERFUL.

HOW IS NOTHING FANCY, REALLY... JUST A
HUNK OF ROCK, A CABIN, TREES, GRASS, AND
A HORSE.



WE ARE ENTERING
DASH THE AIRLOCK
AND HEARS THE JOYFUL
SHOUTS OF THE
CHILDREN.

...HE IS REMINDED AGAIN
WHY HE HAS LONGED FOR
THIS SIMPLE PLACE.



TARA, SITA,
AND JIMMY
ARE THEIR
NAMES.



HOW LONG
WILL YOU BE
HERE? ARE
YOU HOME TO
STAY?

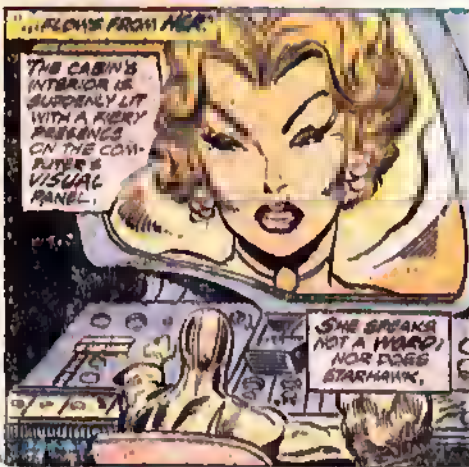
I CANNOT SAY...
UNTIL I'VE CONSULTED
ALETA, TARA.



I AM THE LIGHT...
AND THE GIVER
OF LIGHT...AND THE
TWO MUST DECIDE
JOINTLY.

ALL THAT
I AM...ALL I
CAN BE...

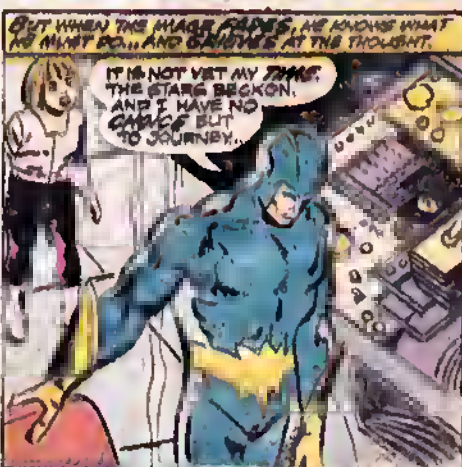
...FLOWS FROM HER.



THE CABIN'S
INTERIOR IS
SUDDENLY LIT
WITH A FIERY
PRESSENCE ON THE COM-
PUTER'S VISUAL
PANEL.

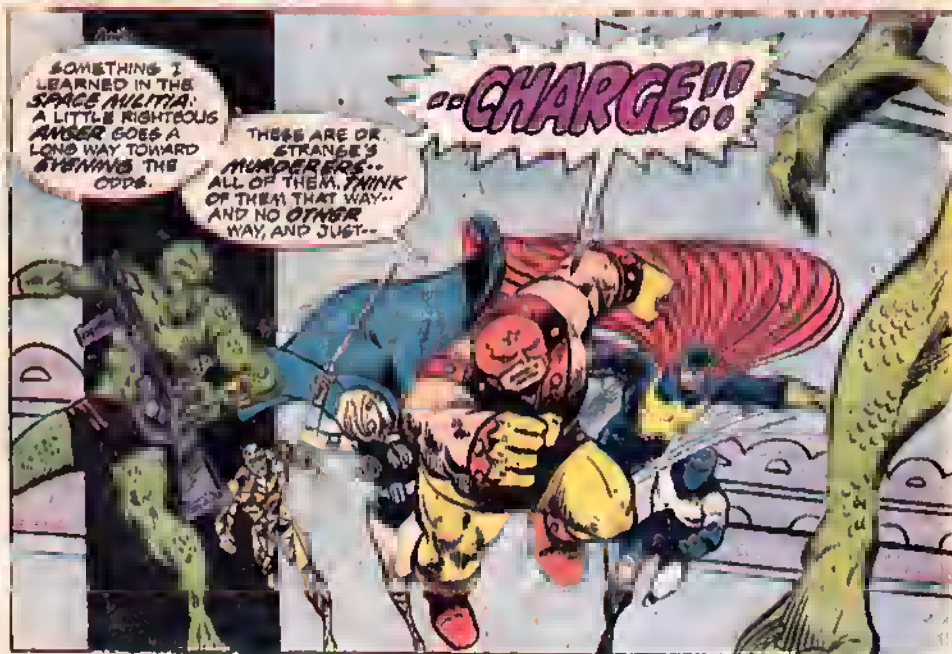
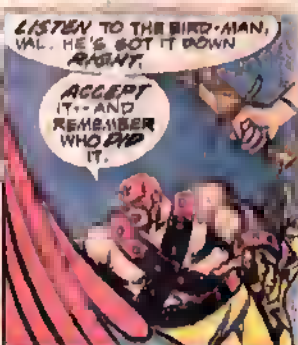
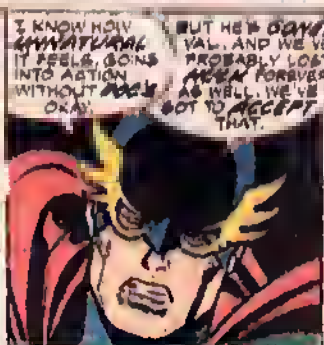
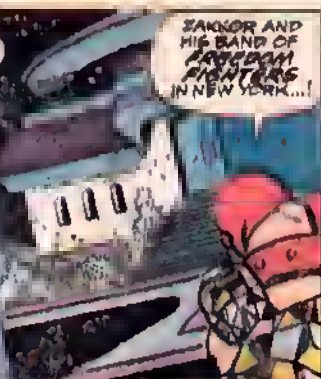
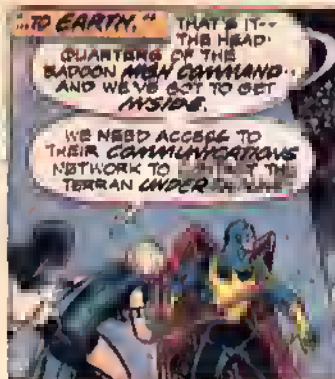
SHE SPEAKS
NOT A WORD,
NOR DOES
STARHAWK.

BUT WHEN THE IMAGE FADES, HE KNOWS WHAT
HE MUST DO...AND GRADUATES AT THE THOUGHT.



IT IS NOT YET MY TIME,
THE STARS BECKON,
AND I HAVE NO
CHOICE BUT
TO JOURNEY.

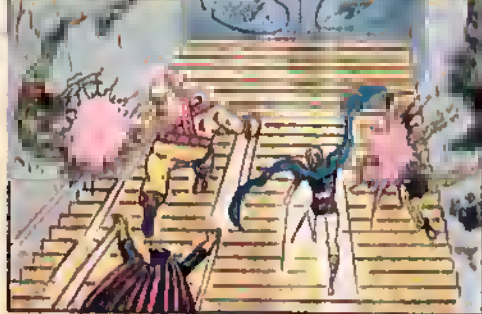
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THERE'S A RING OF
AUTHORITY IN THE
JOYIAN'S DEEP,
MUSCULAR VOICE,
AND HE'S GIVEN
NO COMMAND...

--BUT RATHER,
OFFERED A
CHALLENGE.
AND THE
WARRIOR-WOMAN
RESPONDS.

FISTS POUNDING, BLADE SLASHING, THEY
LUNGE TOGETHER PAST THE RING OF GUARD,
UP THE STAIRS, TO SMATTER THE STEEL
DOORS...



...AND INTO
THEIR ENEMIES'
MIST.

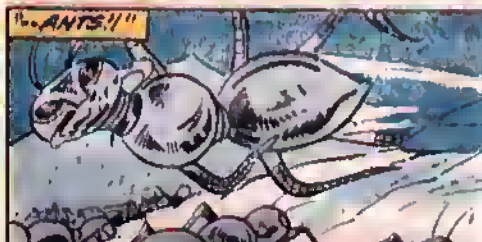


AW, GEE--LOOKS
LIKE WE WEREN'T
EXPECTED!

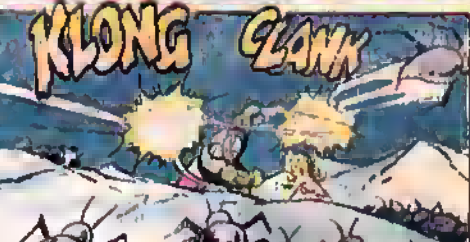


ARM YOUR-
SELVES! CUT
DOWN THE
INTRUDERS!
THEY'RE
TERRANS!
THEY'RE!

"...ANTS!!"



KLONG CLANK



BUGS ARE TOO
MANY



HULK SMASHES
BUGS--BUT ALWAYS
THERE ARE MORE

WHAT CAN
WE DO? EVEN
YOU CAN'T
HOLD THEM
OFF FOREVER!
EVENTUALLY
YOU'LL TIRE,
AND--

WUN! HULK
NEVER GETS
TIRED! BUT
HULK IS SICK
OF FIGHTING
STUPID
BUGS!



HULK JUST
WANTS TO GO
AWAY--GO
HULK WILL!

WUN!
YOU CAN'T
LEAP OFF A
MOUNTAIN!
WE'LL BE!



TELEVISION SCREENS ON THE DRUNKARDS WORLD GO MOMENTARILY GREY, AS ALL THE ORBITING SATELLITE CAMERAS CAN RECORD IS A SHOWER OF NEWLY CRUSHED GRAVEL.

AND WHEN THOSE SCREENS
CLEAR ONCE AGAIN, THE GREEN
BEHEMOTH AND HIS PETITE COMPANION
STAND ON FLAT GROUND AMID
THE DUST-LADEN BODIES OF WHAT
FEW ROBOT ANTS ARE LEFT UNBURIED.

IF THE GIRL WAS AWED
BEFORE... SHE IS STUPE-
FIED NOW, INCAPABLE
EVEN OF SPEAKING.



NOT THAT OUR EVER-EFFERVESCENT EMCEE
WOULD ALLOW HER A WORD IN EDGEBY, ANY
WAY...

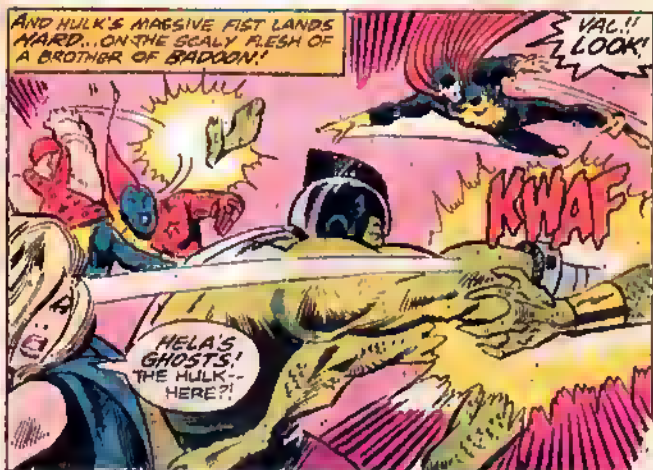
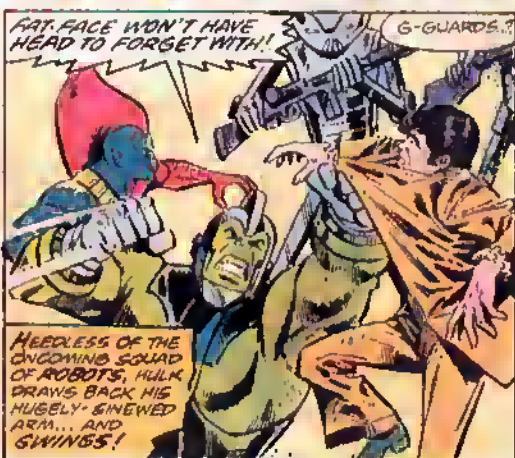
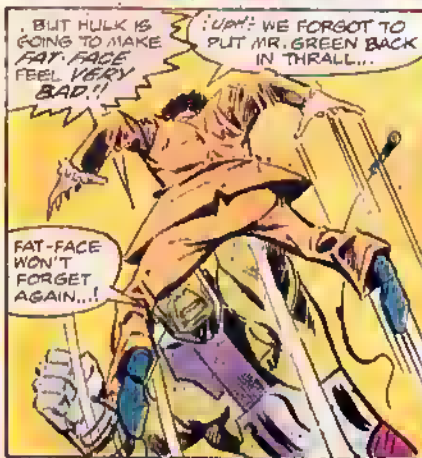


IT'S AN HISTORIC
MOMENT HERE ON
S.D.S., FOLKS--
NOT ONE, NOT TWO,
BUT **THREE**
SURVIVORS ON
THE SAME
EDITION
OF OUR
GAME!



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT,
MY FRIENDS?

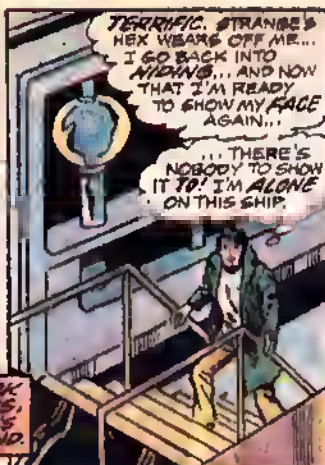
HULK...
FEELS...
SWELL...





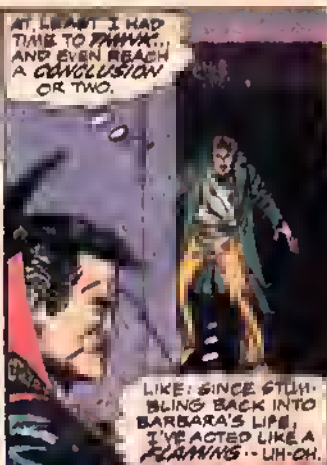
...AS ABOVE, THE GUARDIANS' STARSHIP 'CAPTAIN AMERICA' STILL ORBITS THE EARTH, THE HAUNTING SILENCE IN ITS CORRIDORS BROKEN AT LAST BY THE CAUTIOUS FOOTSTEPS...

...OR JACK NORRIS, WALKYRIE'S HUSBAND.



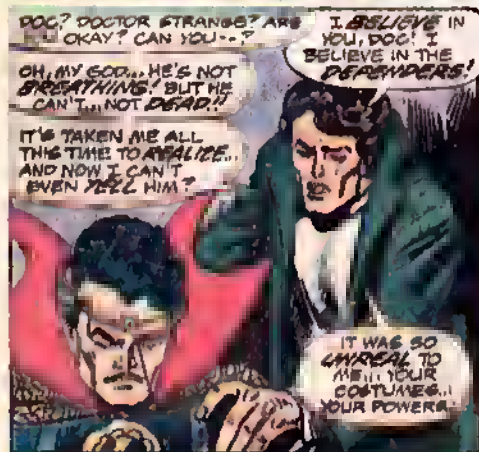
TERRIFIC. STRANGE'S HEX WEARS OFF ME... I GO BACK INTO HIDING... AND NOW THAT I'M READY TO SHOW MY FACE AGAIN...

...THERE'S NOBODY TO SHOW IT TO! I'M ALONE ON THIS SHIP.



AT LEAST I HAD TIME TO THINK... AND EVEN REACH A CONCLUSION OR TWO.

LIKE: SINCE STUMBLING BACK INTO BARBARA'S LIFE, I'VE ACTED LIKE A PLAINFIS... UH-OH.



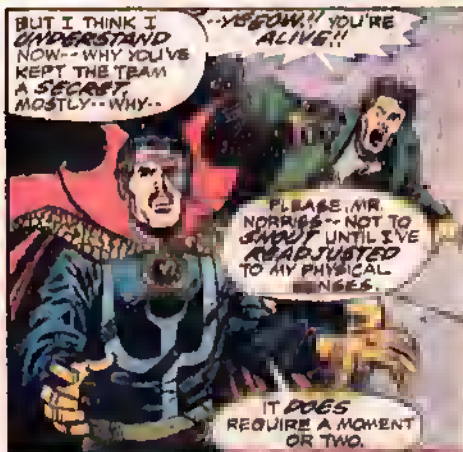
DOC? DOCTOR STRANGE? ARE YOU OKAY? CAN YOU--?

OH, MY GOD... HE'S NOT BREATHING! BUT HE CAN'T... NOT DEAD!!

IT'S TAKEN ME ALL THIS TIME TO REALIZE... AND NOW I CAN'T EVEN TELL HIM?

I BELIEVE IN YOU, DOC! I BELIEVE IN THE DEFENDERS!

IT WAS SO CHIRAL TO ME!! YOUR COSTUMES... YOUR POWERS...



BUT I THINK I UNDERSTAND NOW-- WHY YOU'VE KEPT THE TEAM A SECRET, MOSTLY-- WHY...

--YEEOW!! YOU'RE ALIVE!!

PLEASE, MR. NORRIS, NOT TO GASP UNTIL I'VE READJUSTED TO MY PHYSICAL SENSES.

IT DOES REQUIRE A MOMENT OR TWO.



I CAUGHT PART OF WHAT YOU SAID. I'D LIKE TO HEAR MORE-- WHEN I RETURN FROM EARTH.

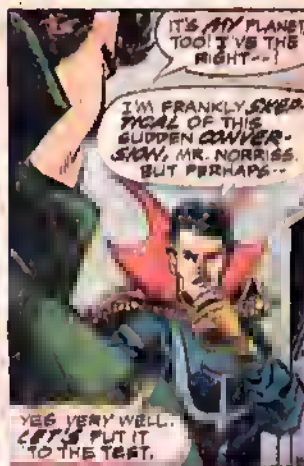
IS BARBARA DOWN THERE? TELL ME!!

SHE IS, YES.



THEN I WANT YOU TO TAKE ME WITH YOU-- LET ME HELP WITH THIS FIGHT.

I'M CONVINCED NOW, DOC-- ABOUT YOU, THE GUARDIANS, THE BAROON-- ALL OF IT!

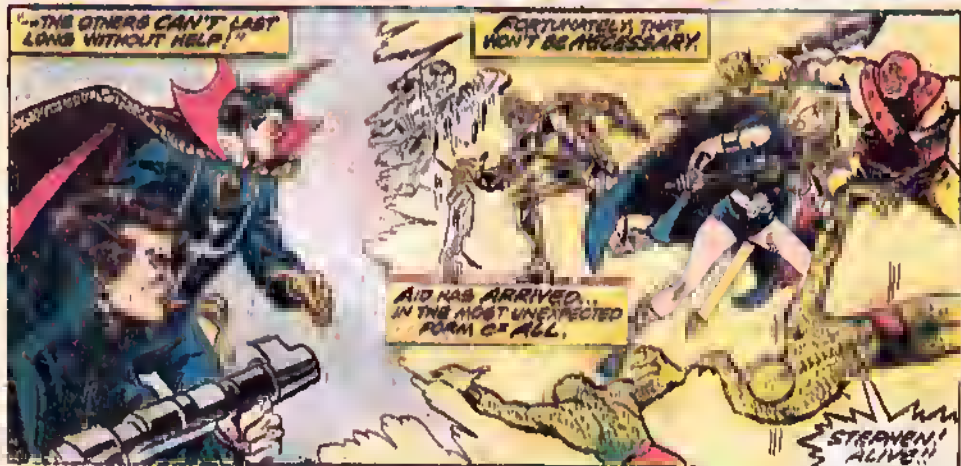
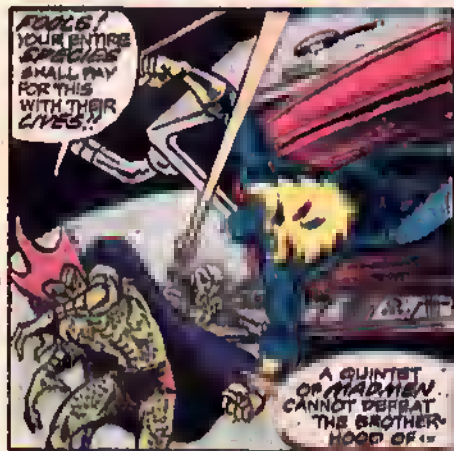
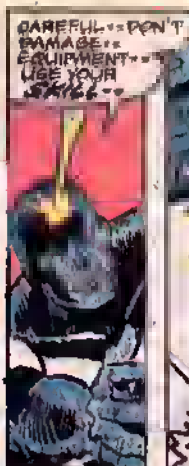
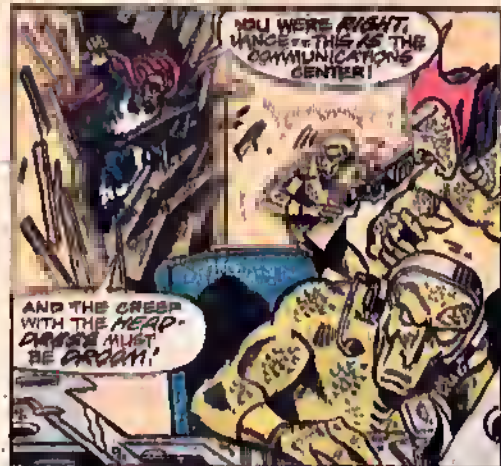


IT'S MY PLANET, TOO! I'VE THE RIGHT--!

I'M FRANKLY SHERMICAL OF THIS SUDDEN CONVERSATION, MR. NORRIS. BUT PERHAPS--

YES VERY WELL. LET'S PUT IT TO THE TEST.

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JACK GRACES HIS ARRIVAL AND SAYS UNUSUALLY EVEN BY HIS OWN STANDARDS, BUT THE MASTER MAGE GRANCES NO EMOTION WHATSOEVER.

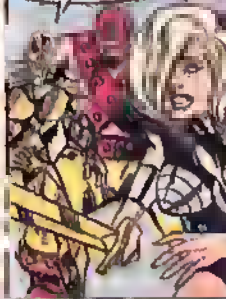


HE OBERLY LOOKS UPON THE RAMPANT VIOLENCE—FEELS IT ANTI-ETHICAL... AND, WITH A GESTURE AND AN UTTERANCE, TERMINATES IT.

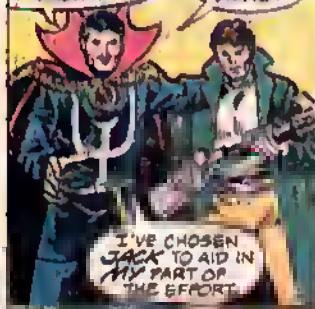


IS THIS SORT OF MIRACLE ROUTINE FOR YOU, OR STRANGE—RISING FROM THE DEAD?

OR ARE WE TO SURMISE YOU WEREN'T?



IT WAS MORE CONVENIENT, MARTINEZ, TO ALLOW THE BARDOON TO BELIEVE WHAT THEY *WANTED*... 'TIL THE PROPER MOMENT.

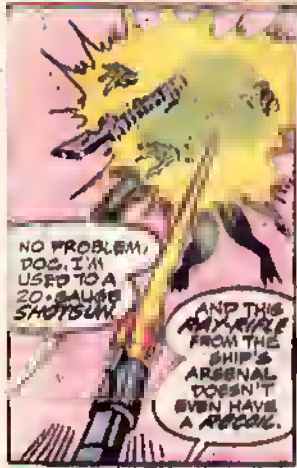


NOW THAT MOMENT IS *NOW*, WHEN ALL EARTH SHALL BE MADE FREE FOR ALL TIME.

I'VE CHOSEN JACK TO AID IN MY PART OF THE EFFORT.

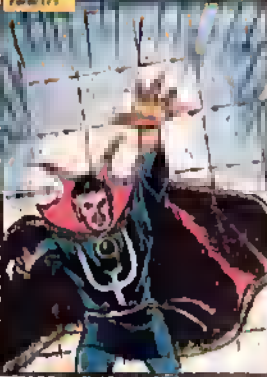


THIS IS ONE OF THE BARDOON PRISON CAMPS, JACK.

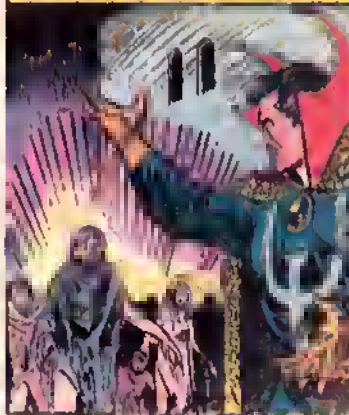


AND THIS RAY RIFLE FROM THE SHIP'S ARSENAL DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A RECOIL.

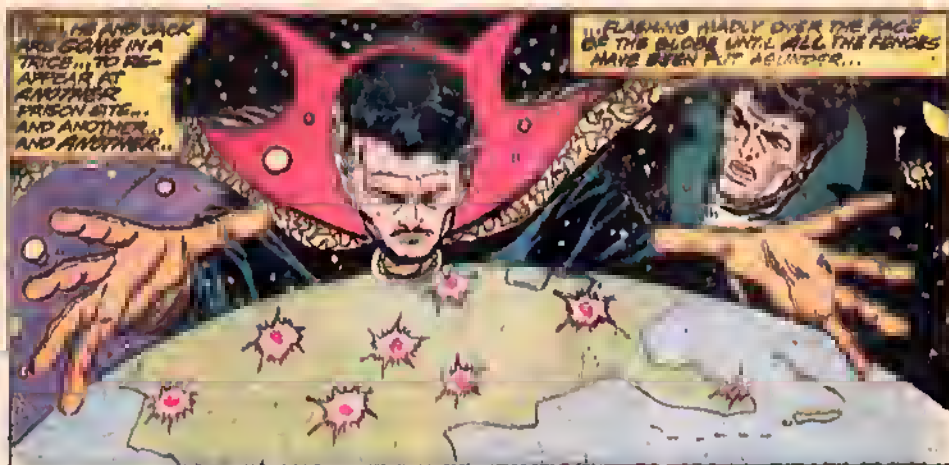
AS JACK DISPENSES WITH THE GUARDS, THE FORGERER SUPREME CAUSES THE FENCES TO DEMATERIALIZE.



...AND CALLS TO THE CAPTIVES TO THROW OFF THEIR SHACKLES.

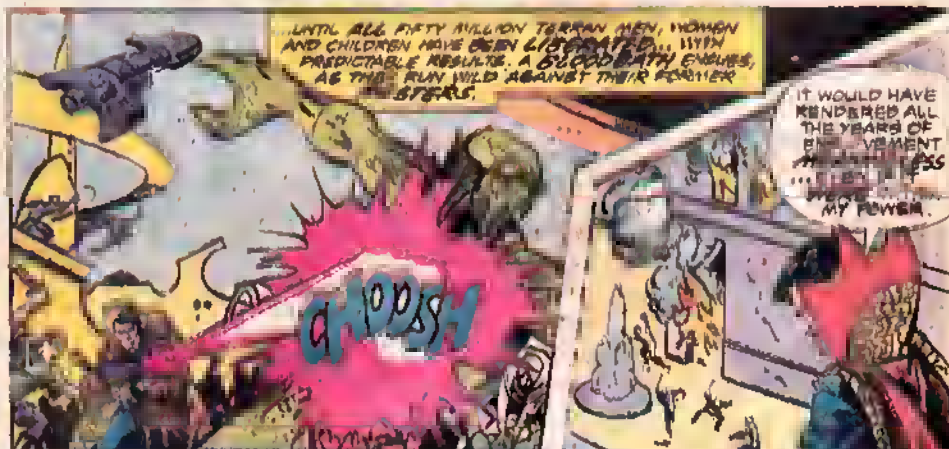


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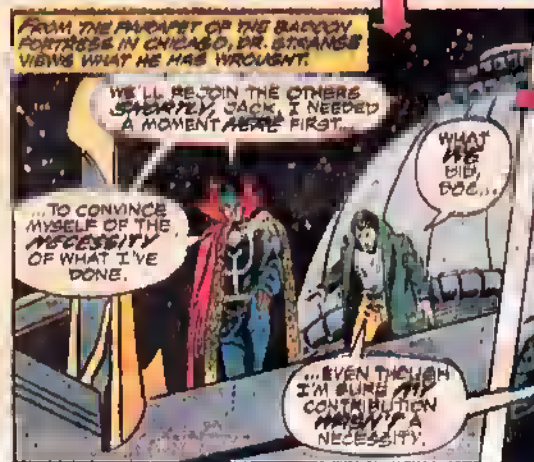
HE AND JACK
ARE GONE IN A
TRICE... TO RE-
APPEAR AT
ANOTHER
PRISON SITE...
AND ANOTHER...
AND ANOTHER...

FLARING BLADLY OVER THE FACE
OF THE GLOBE UNTIL ALL THE FENCES
HAVE BEEN PUT ABLIND...



UNTIL ALL FIFTY MILLION TERRAN MEN, WOMEN
AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN LIGORATED... WITH
PREDICTABLE RESULTS. A SUICIDE BATH ENSUES,
AS THE RUN WILD AGAINST THEIR FORTNER
STERS.

IT WOULD HAVE
RENDERED ALL
THE YEARS OF
BENEFITMENT
...LESS
...MY POWER.



FROM THE FACADET OF THE SACRODY
FORTRESS IN CHICAGO, DR. STRANGE
VIEWS WHAT HE HAS BROUGHT.

WE'LL REJOIN THE OTHERS
SACRELY JACK, I NEEDED
A MOMENT HERE FIRST.

WHAT
HE
BID,
DOE...

...TO CONVINCE
MYSELF OF THE
NECESSITY
OF WHAT I'VE
DONE.

...EVEN THOUGH
I'M SURE MY
CONTRIBUTION
WAS A
NECESSITY.



YOU COULD'VE
SHIPPED THE
BADDON OFF THE
FACE OF THE
EARTH ALL BY
YOURSELF
COULDN'T YOU?
WHY..?

